

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 6-17 are pending in this application. By this amendment, claims 6-17 have been amended to conform to the Patent Office's current requirements regarding system claims. Further, claims 21 and 22 have been added as method claims.

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for his time in a brief telephone interview on June 13, 2006, in which the Examiner further clarified the final rejection of the claims. Claim 6 was discussed but no agreement was reached. In the interview, the Examiner also indicated that the addition of method claims to the present application would be acceptable based on the nature of the application and the fact that method claims were previously cancelled without prejudice.

The Examiner has rejected claims 6-17 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dunphy et al.

Applicant submits that Dunphy describes a relational parts characterization database 103 into which various information for parts can be input and then referred to by a computer program in constructing part groups or the like. In particular, information about each part is entered through a data entry tool 105 or through other interfaces 109, such as test tools that provide other data relating to a part (see Col 3, lines 5-21). The parts may then be further classified into part groups that are defined by a set of

identifying characteristics (see Col. 4, lines 54-64). The parts and part groups then rely on a hierarchical tree structure to define the characteristics of the part or part group (see Col. 5, line 53 to Col. 6, line 7 and Col. 6, lines 28-65 for part groups and Col. 8, lines 11-56 for parts). The tree structure allows each child node to inherit all the characteristics of a parent node via an assigned pointer, without duplicating the data. Dunphy then provides a publishing interface 107 that can be used to access the parts characterization database to generate parts datasheets 117 (see Col. 3, lines 22-30) that include part characteristics (Col. 10, lines 7-29).

Applicant submits that, at best, Dunphy contemplates a comparison of part group characteristics with part characteristics to determine if a part can be considered a part of a part group (see Col. 6, lines 8-25). Dunphy uses the tree structure as a way to connect all of the characteristics of a part or of a part group to the part or part group, as such, in performing the comparison, the tree structure is followed to identify all of the characteristics of a part or part group (see Col. 5, line 53 to Col. 6, line 7 and Col. 6, lines 28-65 for part groups and Col. 8, lines 11-56 for parts).

Applicant submits that Dunphy performs a search according to the standard method of checking to see whether or not a part has a particular attribute. Dunphy does not deal with the creation of new attributes or correspondence relations based on a customer query or customer search keywords (which may not match with the recorded attributes of a product) and the recording of new attributes of a product on the basis of

the customer query or search keywords. Further, Dunphy does not refer to these new attributes and correspondence relations in another transaction.

As previously indicated, Dunphy describes a relation database structure including pointers. As such, Applicant submits that Dunphy does not teach or suggest the use of an apparatus configured to perform a cellular decomposition operation or a cellular attaching operation.

Applicant submits that none of the cited references (Durphy et al. or Durphy et al. combined with Spiegel et al.) teach or suggest at least the feature of a correspondence generating unit configured to: specify correspondence relations between search keywords input by the customer and information (attributes) on merchandise presented by a shop; determine if a correspondence relation is new; and record the new search keyword and information as a new attribute, as generally claimed in claim 6.

Applicant further submits that none of the cited references (Durphy et al. or Durphy et al. combined with Spiegel et al.) teach or suggest at least the feature of a correspondence presenting unit configured to read out and present the correspondence relations stored in the table at a stage of another transaction, as generally claimed in claim 6.

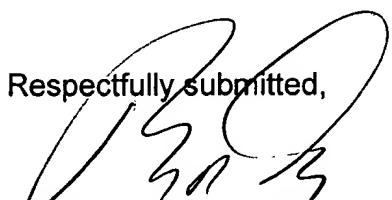
Based on at least the foregoing arguments, Applicant submits that independent

claim 6 is in condition for allowance. New claim 21 represents a method that generally corresponds to the system of claim 6 and claim 22 provides a reworded version of claim 21 more closely related to a specific embodiment. As such, for at least similar reasons to those outlined above, Applicant submits that claims 21 and 22 are in condition for allowance. Claims 7-17 depend from claim 6 and for similar reasons, as well as the additional limitations therein, are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

Conclusion:

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favourable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited. Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned in order to arrange an interview if further discussion would advance this case to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,


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